

**School of Technology**

**Council of the School**

**2.00 p.m. on Friday, 29 November 2019**

**Board Room, Department of Engineering**

**UNRESERVED MINUTES**

Present: Professor John Dennis (Chair)  
Professor Richard Prager  
Professor Lisa Hall  
Professor Christoph Loch  
Professor Vincent Mak  
Professor Holger Babinsky  
Professor Robin Langley  
Professor Simon Guest  
Professor Tim Minshall  
Professor Simon Godsill  
Professor Richard Penty (Deputy Head of School)  
Dr Patrick Barrie (Director of Education)  
Professor Garth Wells (School observer)  
Dr Shui Lam (Secretary)  
Ms Joanna Walmsley (Interim School Finance Manager)  
Dr Ann Thompson (School Research Strategy Facilitator)

In Attendance: Ms Tracy Brooks, Professor George Malliaras

Apologies: Dame Polly Courtice, Professor Ann Copestake, Professor Alex Routh, Professor Alastair Beresford, Professor Andrew Flewitt

**Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**1. Minutes**

The Chair confirmed the School's Vision document had been updated as agreed. The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2019 were approved.

## **Matters Arising**

The Head of School reported that he had met with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), who was keen for the West Cambridge site scientific facilities to be shared and offered resource to support this. The Head of School expressed the hope that the sharing might be extended to workshop facilities and technician training.

## **Chair's Report**

The Head of School provided a verbal report:

1. RPC: A call for the funding of two further SRIs will be announced early 2020, with Quantum being one of the suggested fields.
2. There was a meeting of Shell with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations) on the 29 November 2019 regarding their interest in Systems Thinking in the Energy Transition space that the School of Technology should be in a good position to respond to. In addition, Departments can contribute to challenges such as decarbonising the University's estate, salient following the recent launch of Cambridge Zero.
3. The School followed up with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Relations) on the Industrial Grand Challenges that were discussed at the School Away Day. This resulted in Professor Neely asking the School to propose Academic Champions for these sectors. Those filling these roles would need to invest time in attending meetings, but involvement in Grand Challenges could increase the access to and success of high-value research and innovation funding.
4. General Board: Engineering and School of Technology were mentioned favourably for allowing Architecture to use Dyson Building space.

Deputy Head of School reported that he had arranged to meet with the Deputy Heads of Research for each Department over the next few weeks.

Dr Barrie provided a verbal report and the following key points were made in addition to the written report:

1. The consultation on undergraduate admissions and outreach has been forwarded to all the relevant departmental leads for comments.
2. The University is concerned with the consequence of the recent unsuccessful application to continue the BBSRC DTP. The BBSRC reportedly rejected this bid due to the insufficiency of collaboration/partnerships, training and progress on equality and diversity and widening participation. The EPSRC DTP was successful this year, and did well in these increasingly important areas. The School office is organising equality and diversity training which could be rolled out to the wider University, to improve the University's offering to postgraduate students.

## **2. Starred Items**

The Committee approved the starred items.

### **3. Strategic Business**

#### **3.1 Towards an International Strategy**

As requested by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Institutional and International Relations), the Council of the School discussed the consultation document "Towards an International Strategy for the University of Cambridge", **T/19/55**, which contained four goals:

1. Extend our impact and contribute to global public good
2. Generate and contribute to globally leading research
3. Compete globally to recruit the best students ..., and
4. Ensure that we have a global voice and influence.

The Council of the School was of the opinion that any strengthening of international links should remain with the very best global Universities and Institutes. Unfortunately, there was a disconnect between the University's stated ambitions and the operational support it provided to Departments.

It was generally agreed that centrally driven strategy should be avoided and that current international activity was not driven from central strategy. International growth should be developed by separate parts of the University being allowed to explore opportunities, then test and experiment. The School was of the opinion that it would be best if Departments could take opportunities as they arose, with the central administration providing the professional support such as integrity check, coordination and advice such as overseas tax and legal compliance.

The School agreed that the Strategy should be restructured to reflect that international strategy should be bottom up, with central administration providing appropriate funding, operational and professional support. Additional comments could be sent to the Secretary by the end of December 2019, to allow the Secretary to respond, by the deadline of 15 January 2020, to the questions in **T/19/56**.

#### **3.2 HR Consultations**

It was reported that there were currently a number of HR consultations during the Michaelmas Term 2019:

<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-consultations-michaelmas-term-2019-overview>

Of these, the key areas requiring consideration by the Council of the School were:

## **(A) Academic Titles**

The consultation paper is available at:

[https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/academic\\_titles\\_proposal\\_final\\_2.pdf](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/academic_titles_proposal_final_2.pdf)

The draft response to the consultation paper from the School HR Committee, prepared by the HR Business Manager, Paper **T/19/57**, was discussed. The process and broad range of institutions and individuals consulted by Central Administration were discussed as potentially causing confusion and conflict of interest.

The Council of the School agreed that the response should be modified to reflect the variety of views held within the School. However, it would not be feasible to collate the Departmental responses due to timescales set centrally. There was consensus that Professor and Readers should not be grouped together using a single title.

The Council of the School was asked to send to the HR Manager comments to be included in the revised response, due 13 December 2019.

## **(B) Academic Career pathway**

It was reported that a revised SAP would be launched in Michaelmas term 2020, with the condition that Departments and Faculties adopted and published guidance setting out the expectations required for passing probation and promotion. After consultation with Departments and the HR Committee, the Council of the School consulted the draft guidance in Paper **T/19/58**.

It was agreed to revise the expectations required for passing probation and promotion on page 4 and page 5, from a description of the quantity of publications to the quality of publications.

The Council of the School approved the paper subject to the change, which the HR Manager agreed to implement.

## **(C) Teaching focussed Career Pathway**

The central HR Committee established a Working Group in January 2019 to consider and make proposals relating to the career progression and contractual status of teaching-focused staff across the University. The Group have made a number of recommendations and raised a number of matters to be considered which are set out in the Consultation Report. The Group has also proposed a career pathway for teaching-focused staff in grades 6-12, set out in Scheme A and Scheme B.

The consultation paper is available at:

[https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/teaching\\_focussed\\_career\\_pathway\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/teaching_focussed_career_pathway_consultation_paper.pdf)

Following discussions at the HR Committee, a draft response has been prepared by the HR Business Manager in Paper **T/19/59**. There were concerns that if a specific career route and promotions path was available for teaching focussed staff, and not the other academic-related or assistant staff, this could be seen as unfair and increase applications for regrading in these categories. The Council of the School welcomed the recognition of teaching and was happy to support the response as long as safeguards were in place to prevent staff being pressured into this route due to REF considerations.

### **(D) Dual University Senior Lecturer (USL) Career Pathway**

The consultation paper is available at:

[https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/dual\\_usl\\_career\\_pathway\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/dual_usl_career_pathway_consultation_paper.pdf)

The consultation paper was discussed with the HR Business Manager noting that some strong views in opposition to this had been expressed in parts of the University. The Council of the School was asked to send to the HR Manager comments to be included in the revised response, due 6 December 2019.

### **(E) Researcher Career Pathway**

The consultation paper is available at:

[https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/research\\_career\\_pathway\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/research_career_pathway_consultation_paper.pdf)

Professor Prager, as Chair of the working group, commented. It was felt that, sometimes, the promotion process for researchers might be perceived to invite less diligence. Therefore, bringing it more in line with the ACP was a good step forward.

The Council of the School agreed that, because established academic staff have a broader range of responsibilities, it would be appropriate for them to serve on the RCP promotion committees, but not the other round, namely Researchers on ACP promotion committees.

Ms Tracy Brooks was thanked for her contributions and left the meeting.

## **3.3 Strategy and Planning Workshops**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning) wrote to the Heads of School on a new approach to strategy and planning, (**T/19/60**), including the VC's Programme of Action (**T/19/61**), the CFO's Surplus Improvement Plan (**T/19/62**) and two discussion workshops over the next six months, **T/19/63**, the first to concentrate on the size and shape of the student population. The School has an opportunity to shape the new approach. The School Strategy and Planning Committee considered the matter and the unconfirmed minutes of the discussion is attached as Paper **T/19/64**.

The Council of the School had further comments:

- Engineering would like to make the case for an increase in Engineering undergraduate numbers more strongly as it was already heavily oversubscribed, and the Head of Engineering was confident that the Department could accommodate an increase in students. It was felt that the current balance of Arts to Science undergraduate places was becoming unfair. In particular, there was an increasing demand for Computer Science (11 applicants per place), Engineering (8 applicants) and CEB (9 applicants), with demands for Arts undergraduate places decreasing (averaging about 3 applicants per place).
- To a query about increasing the interdisciplinary nature of triposes, Professor Prager commented that the Engineering Tripos was inherently interdisciplinary, and that the size and scope of individual divisions within Engineering would normally merit their being separate departments in most universities. It was agreed that the interdisciplinarity and collaborative nature of Engineering must be better understood within the University.
- The Chemical Engineering Tripos is currently undergoing a review so that perceptions that it is strongly linked to extractive industries will be countered.

The Head and Secretary of School agreed to feed the relevant opinions at the workshop and keep the School informed of further developments of the new planning approach.

#### **4. Regular Business**

##### **4.1 Planning round 2019**

The Council of the School was reminded that the School's five year plan (2019-24) was due for submission on 2 December 2019. PRC have endorsed a revised approach for PR19, requiring fewer detailed submissions than in previous years.

##### **4.2 School Risk Register**

The School's Risk Register Paper **T/19/65**, to be submitted as part of the planning submission, was approved.

##### **4.3 Postgraduate student numbers**

Paper **T/19/66**, containing the planned postgraduate student numbers over the five years, was approved by the Council of the School.

The Council of the School was reminded that during the 2018 Planning Round, the Schools have been asked to deliver an additional non-recurrent saving of £1m each in 2019/20. The PRC accepted the School of Technology's offer to meet some of the savings from a one-year increase in MPhil numbers. It was

reported that the important measure will be the actual 2019-20 MPhil student numbers compared with the planned numbers for 2019-20 from the 2018 Planning Round. When PRAO has confirmed the additional income generated from any increase in MPhil students compared to Plan for 2019-20, the effect on the £1m savings will be brought to a future meeting.

#### **4.4 Chest savings**

It was reported that the Planning assumptions currently stated that, after flat allocations in 2019-20, Chest allocations should be forecasted at 1% growth in all other years of the plan. As pay and non-pay costs were assumed to grow at 2% p.a, this results in high levels of savings in later years of the plan.

These savings might change before Departmental Chest allocations are confirmed for 2020-21 as the effect of the Income Incentivisation Model (IIM) on allocations for 2020-21 has yet to be confirmed by PRAO. The update on the IIM will be brought to a future meeting. Paper **T/19/67** setting out these assumptions and showing the School and Departmental Chest draft savings was approved.

#### **4.5 CDT portfolio**

The financial exposure to the two CDT bids currently active was detailed in paper **T/19/68** which was approved. It was discussed that a proportion of the funding was to come from industry, but if no funding could be found, the potential exposure of the School might be up to £3m, but the risk was low.

#### **4.6 Prodigy Loan Scheme 2019 Intake, update**

At the meeting, it was reported that the loan rate for the 2019 Prodigy loan had been confirmed at 3.92%, lower than the 4% rate at which the Chest would lend to School in the unlikely event of the School needing to borrow a matching loan. The Council of the School was reassured that the risk to the School was minimal.

Paper **T/19/69** updates the effect of the lower rate on the £500k loan agreed at the Council of the School to CJBS at its meeting on 14 June 2019.

### **5. Straightforward Business**

#### **5.1 Health and Safety Matters**

The Council of the School raised no Health and Safety matters.

#### **5.2 Risk Assessment**

The Council of the School assessed the risks of the decisions made at this meeting and decided not to amend the Risk Register.



**6. \*\*\*Minutes of Other Committees**

Strategy and Planning Committee	19 November 2019	<b>T/19/70</b>
Graduate School Committee	22 May 2019	<b>T/19/71</b>
IT Strategy Committee	24 October 2019	<b>T/19/72</b>

**7. Any Other Business**

There was no further business

**8. Dates of Future Meetings 2019-20**

2.00 p.m. in Large Meeting Room, Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology:

Friday, 31 January 2020

2.00 p.m. in Room W2.01, Judge Business School:

Friday, 06 March 2020

2.00 p.m. in Board Room, Department of Engineering:

Friday, 08 May 2020

2.00 p.m. in FW11, Computer Laboratory:

Friday, 12 June 2020